

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Fern Ridge Embankment Dam Repair
Lane County, Oregon

The proposed action is to perform an immediate, emergency repair of the drainage system for the embankment dam at Fern Ridge Lake, located on the Long Tom River in Lane County, Oregon. The dam is in an active state of piping or internal erosion failure. In December 2004, an operating restriction limiting reservoir filling to no higher than elevation 360 feet was placed on the project to protect the public's safety by preventing a dam failure. The restriction adversely affects the long-term flood damage reduction, irrigation, recreation, fish and wildlife, and local economic benefits provided by the project. Without repair, the dam would continue to deteriorate until all benefits are lost or the dam fails.

Since release of the draft Environmental Assessment, engineering analysis has determined that the reservoir can be kept at elevation 355 feet without compromising the dam during repair, which would provide a pool of about 1,330 surface acres. During construction, every attempt will be made to keep the reservoir at this elevation or no lower than elevation 350 feet (about 480 surface acres). The additional water provided at this higher pool level should help reduce some of the water temperature, turbidity, and reservoir/downstream aquatic resources impacts during repair of the dam.

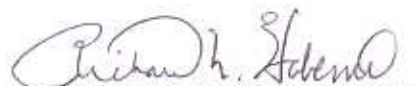
Continued monitoring of the bald eagle nest site near Orchard Point Park shows that the nest was abandoned in mid-March. No re-nesting has occurred. Therefore, the use of the stockpile area near Orchard Point Park will no longer have an effect on nesting bald eagles.

Additional stockpile areas will be needed for construction. A 21-acre stockpile area north of the Richardson Park parking lot has been added and the stockpile area along the east lakebed near Orchard Point Park has been enlarged since the bald eagle nest site has been abandoned. The stockpile area between Clear Lake Road and the dam will require removal of a small, vertically banked drainage ditch that exists immediately east of the spillway. The vegetation found in the ditch is dominated by exotic species and a few robust natives characteristic of disturbed wetland sites. Once all stockpiled material is removed, the ditch will be restored similar to its existing condition.

Fish monitoring in the reservoir and the lower Long Tom River will be conducted during the construction period. Fish collected will be assessed for general health and condition, as well as species composition. There is a potential for the relocation of some warm-water game species, principally bass, during the construction period. This will be done in cooperation with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment and determined that the proposed action would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Date: May 2, 2005


RICHARD W. HOBERNIGHT
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Commanding